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REPORT OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD*

Fifteenth executive session

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INTRODUCTION

1. The fifteenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 27 June 1997. The executive session consisted of two meetings - the 884th and 885th plenary meetings of the Board. The agenda of the fifteenth executive session is reproduced in annex I below.

Chapter I

MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION BY THE BOARD IN FOLLOW-UP TO THE NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE AND ARISING FROM OR RELATED TO REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES OF ITS SUBSIDIARY AND OTHER BODIES

(Agenda item 2)

(a) Reports of the Commissions on their first sessions

(i) Report of the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities on its first session (6-8 November 1996 and 19-21 February 1997)

Action by the Board

2. The Board took note of the report of the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities on its first session (TD/B/44/5-TD/B/COM.1/6) and endorsed the two agreed conclusions in annex I of the report.

(ii) Report of the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues on its first session (18-22 November 1996 and 7 February 1997)

Action by the Board

3. The Board took note of the report of the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues on its first session (TD/B/44/5-TD/B/COM.2/4) and endorsed the agreed conclusions in annex I, on the understanding that the question of the status of the Expert Meeting on Competition Law and Policy and of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) and their relationship with the other expert meetings of the Commission are still the subject of further consultations by the President of the Board.

Statements made in connection with the report of Commission 2

4. The spokesman for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Mexico), referring to the juridical status of the Expert Meeting on Competition Law and Policy and of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) in the wake of the Midrand restructuring of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, stated that the Latin American and Caribbean Group had taken due note of the President's decision to invite a member of the Bureau to resume informal consultations, open to all interested delegations, to consider the legal situation of the two expert groups. He requested that the consultations should take as their basis the opinion handed down by the United Nations Legal Counsel, dated 29 May 1997. The position of the Latin American and Caribbean Group was that the above-mentioned expert groups continued to exist in the framework of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, that their juridical identity was different to that of the expert meetings provided for in paragraph 114 of the Midrand final document, and that they were not subject to the agreed limit on

the annual establishment of a maximum of 10 expert meetings by the Board's Commissions.

5. The representative of **Brazil** endorsed the statement by the spokesman for the Latin American and Caribbean Group. He too felt that it was important to ensure that the proposed consultations were open-ended and that they should take full account of the opinion given by the United Nations Legal Counsel on the status of the two expert groups.

6. The representative of **China** expressed his delegation's support for the Latin American and Caribbean Group position on this issue. The authority for the President to hold consultations on the status of the two expert groups derived from the agreed conclusions adopted at the first session of Commission 2. With particular reference to ISAR, he recalled that this Group had been established by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Moreover, ISAR was specifically mentioned in the Midrand final document. He therefore considered that ISAR should continue to exist with its original status intact. He welcomed the proposed informal consultations.

7. The representative of **The Netherlands**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, observed that the problem of the exact status of the two expert groups was blocking progress in the respective areas of UNCTAD's work. He therefore welcomed the forthcoming consultations. In this connection, he stated that the presidency of the European Union would pass to another member country as from 30 June 1997 but that, in order to ensure continuity on this particular question, the European Union would be represented in the consultations by both the current and the incoming coordinators.

8. The spokesman for the **African Group** (Morocco) said that his Group strongly supported the continued existence of the two expert groups. He looked forward to the informal consultations and requested that other regional groups should be allowed to be represented by two coordinators if they so wished.

9. Referring to the procedural aspects of the forthcoming consultations, the representative of **Pakistan** urged the Vice-President who would be holding the consultations to be as flexible as possible in inviting participants. While he recognized that too many participants might complicate matters, he felt that a flexible approach on participation would make for greater progress.

(iii) Report of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development on its first session (20-24 January 1997)

Action by the Board

10. The Board took note of the report of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development on its first session (TD/B/44/2-TD/B/COM.3/4) and endorsed the agreed conclusions in annex I and II of the report.

(iv) Debate on the functioning of the new intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, in particular the Commissions and the Expert Meetings, since UNCTAD IX

11. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD observed that the experience gained so far from the first round of the Commissions was not sufficient for drawing hard-and-fast conclusions as to how the machinery established in UNCTAD was functioning. The information available at the moment was incomplete and might offer only partial perspectives that would not enable the Board to reach sound conclusions or pass judgement on the performance of the Commissions. He had been receiving valuable advice and written comments in response to his request for assessments of the functioning of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, which had inspired him to propose a methodology that would allow the Board time to have a fruitful debate on this matter. The methodology in question had the following elements:

(a) All the Chairpersons should be requested to provide their own evaluations of their experiences in conducting the work of their Commission or expert group, and to seek from them suggestions for improvement or changes in the approaches adopted.

(b) An attempt at a rational and intelligent assessment of the expert groups should be made by taking into account responses to a questionnaire that the secretariat was preparing for the experts on their own personal assessment. Through networking and contacts the secretariat would try to elicit the necessary information and to ensure that in future each expert meeting would have before it a questionnaire on all relevant aspects of the work undertaken. The views of experts and delegations, supported by statistical analysis, would be sought on broad issues, such as balance in the distribution of experts, choice of subjects covered, the organization of meetings and panels, whether the subjects discussed had been exhausted or needed follow-up, and the nature of conclusions, recommendations and outcomes.

(c) Once the secretariat had collected such information - in addition to that which it already had in its possession - it would be possible to have a meaningful discussion that would take into account the lessons learnt. This could be effected through an informal process leading to the mid-term review and/or in discussions at an executive session of the Board, but it should be a gradual process of assessment supported by written contributions in accordance with the methodology he had suggested.

12. The **Chairman of the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities** (France) observed that the discussions during the first session of Commission 1 had been marked by an altogether excessive attention to procedural matters, especially regarding the choice of themes to be assigned to the Expert Meetings. As a result, the themes had at times been over-refined, imperfectly linked to the agenda of the second session of the Commission, and not always of obvious relevance to the future needs and work of UNCTAD. The substantive debate had on the whole been disappointing, being inconclusive and unlikely to contribute to policy-making in the member

countries. No doubt the agenda items had been too general, and this in turn had meant that the delegations had not always included experts who might have engaged in a more fruitful debate. He felt that if the Commissions were to function in a "closed circuit" whereby they were mainly concerned with organizing their future work, considerable harm would be done to the capacity of the new intergovernmental machinery to fulfil the mandate given to it at UNCTAD IX. Major changes were thus both necessary and urgent.

13. At the same time, the first round of Expert Meetings had been the scene of interesting discussions and had for the most part been spared from political or procedural considerations. They had put forward interesting ideas and suggested work which UNCTAD could undertake in future. It was now essential to make the best use of their suggestions.

14. With a view to perfecting the functioning of the Commissions and ensuring that they articulated properly with the Expert Meetings and the Board, he outlined for consideration the following objectives and tentative solutions:

(a) The substantive agenda items should relate to more specific and more topical questions that were likely to attract economic policy experts.

(b) Recourse should continue to be had to panels, with external experts making presentations of experiences and concrete situations that were specific and fairly technical. At the same time, care should be taken to organize a satisfactory link and interaction with the traditional intergovernmental debate.

(c) It was essential that the Commissions should derive maximum benefit from the Expert Meetings and that they should use this "asset" in selecting themes for the following Meetings. In this regard, each Commission might do well to take account of relevant outcomes of Expert Meetings other than its own. It would be disastrous for a Commission to give the impression that it was not making use of the work of Expert Meetings which it had itself convened: one could well imagine the deterrent effect this would have on participation of experts in those Meetings.

(d) One should try to devise themes for Expert Meetings that were simple, precise and relevant, and which corresponded to the development needs of member States, with a view to attracting high-level experts.

(e) Reasonable, but judicious and effective, use should be made of preliminary consultations and secretariat documents in the preparatory process for intergovernmental meetings.

(f) The managerial prerogatives of the Bureau of the Board, meeting in non-extended session, should be preserved.

(g) An attempt should be made to establish a degree of coherence between the substantive sessions of the Board and the sessions of the Commissions, to enable the expertise of the Expert Meetings to find its way up to the Board and, inversely, to allow the

Commissions to take due account of the deliberations of the Board.

15. The **Chairman of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development** (Costa Rica) said that the debate in Commission 3 had been fast-moving and to the point. The themes had been well chosen and had retained the interest of the participants. He wished, however, to mention two aspects in which there was room for improvement:

(a) Regarding the work of the panels, while the individual contributions had been of a high level and interesting, there was a general problem with the time taken up by the panels, which had been long when compared with the time available for the intergovernmental debate. Furthermore, the work of the Commissions could be enriched if, following the panel, an analysis could be made of the contents of the panellists' discussions.

(b) As for the presentations themselves, all of them had been pitched at a high technical level and had provided interesting and useful information for countries that did not have expertise in the subject under discussion. But the outcome of the Commission could have been more fruitful if a greater number of specialists from national capitals had been able to participate in the panel discussions. This need should be taken into account in the organization of future sessions of the Commissions.

16. The representative of **Switzerland** said his delegation shared the view of the Chairman of Commission 1 that the functioning of the new intergovernmental machinery did present certain difficulties. While there were differences in the performance of the three Commissions, he observed that the UNCTAD machinery was beset by a systemic problem, namely that of functioning in a closed circuit. In a formal sense, the Commissions had indeed functioned and at times even achieved results of some substance, but he felt that the spirit of Midrand was somehow missing. The innovations adopted at UNCTAD IX aimed to ensure that the Board, the Commissions and the subsidiary bodies of the Commissions would function as a living body, interacting in such a way as to achieve a constant regeneration of the substantive work, based on direct contact with the realities of the outside world. His delegation would therefore examine with great interest the proposals made by the Chairman of Commission 1.

17. Regarding the reports of the Commissions, he pointed out that a new situation would occur towards the end of 1997 with the convening of the High-level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least Developed Countries' Trade Development (UNCTAD/WTO). Therefore, the programme elements set forth in the reports of the Commissions should take full account of the outcome of the High-level Meeting, and it would be appropriate for the Board to give practical instructions to its Commissions in this respect.

18. The representative of **The Netherlands**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, considered that there were two issues at hand with regard to the functioning of the new intergovernmental machinery. The first was basically a matter of substance: was the substantive work done by the Commissions and the Expert Meetings sufficiently relevant to, and in line

with, the overall mandate given to UNCTAD at the ninth session of the Conference? This aspect might indeed involve a discussion for which the Board was not yet ready, and its consideration should perhaps be deferred until the mid-term review, i.e. after the convening of the second sessions of the Commissions. The second issue was that of the functioning of the machinery, including the interface between the Expert Meetings and the Commissions, as well as among the three Commissions themselves, and between the latter and the Board. In the view of the European Union, a debate on this aspect did appear to be urgent and could not wait until the mid-term review, since there was a need to clarify how the results of the Expert Meetings held so far would be fed into the second sessions of the Commissions. It would also be necessary to make sure that the Commissions devoted their time to policy debates rather than to procedural discussions. In this endeavour, the secretariat should assume a proactive preparatory role.

19. The representative of **Norway** agreed with the European Union view that the functional aspects of the new intergovernmental machinery could be examined already, without waiting for the mid-term review. He also agreed very much with the assessment and the seven proposals for improvement just outlined by the Chairman of Committee 1, which were clear and highly relevant. Commenting on the third proposal - namely, the need for the Commissions to ensure that they derived the utmost benefit from the work of the Expert Meetings - he emphasized his delegation's view that the Expert Meetings must be truly expert in terms of their participation. Although the experts might be nominated by their governments, they were expected to participate in their personal expert capacity and not as national representatives. It was at a later stage, when the Commissions came to consider the reports of the Expert Meetings, that government representatives could rightly voice their views on the work and outcomes of the Meetings. It was not the role of government representatives to take over the Expert Meetings, especially at the stage when they were drawing up their recommendations or conclusions, but rather to observe and learn.

20. The spokesman for the **African Group** (Morocco) expressed the view that it was not possible to isolate from each other the substantive and the functional components of the intergovernmental machinery. Moreover, the African Group had not come prepared for an in-depth discussion of the machinery at this session of the Board. His Group would prefer to wait until after the second sessions of the Commissions before engaging in a review and assessment of the new mechanisms. He therefore supported the methodology proposed by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

21. The representative of **South Africa** expressed agreement with the observations made by other delegations on this item. Although undoubtedly more time was needed before a full assessment could be made of the workings of the new machinery, he recalled the general consensus at UNCTAD IX that the intergovernmental machinery then in place had not been functioning well and that urgent reform was necessary. There had been a growing awareness in recent weeks that problems remained - an awareness that was reflected in the questionnaire sent out by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. In his delegation's view, the UNCTAD membership should already be engaged in an informal process of fine tuning.

22. The representative of **Turkey** agreed that it was still necessary to consider how to improve the working methods in UNCTAD. She felt that

procedural matters had taken up too much time in formal meetings. As yet, there were no guidelines on the manner of interaction between the Commissions and their Expert Meetings or on the lines of reporting and follow-up. Finally, she considered that the substantive outcome of the Commissions had so far been fairly meagre and general. Her delegation had hoped that the specialists participating in the panels would generate a lively exchange among delegations, but the setting had proved rather too formal to allow for such interaction.

(b) Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget on its twenty-ninth session (16-17 January and 21-23 May 1997)

23. The **Chairman of the Working Party at its twenty-ninth session** (Norway), reporting orally on the outcome of the twenty-ninth session, outlined the main agreed conclusions and the discussions that had taken place during the session. He expressed his satisfaction that, while there had been a number of comments from the member States on specific items or issues, the Working Party had agreed that the proposed programme budget provided an adequate basis for UNCTAD to carry out its mandate. The text of the agreed conclusions and the Chairman's summary of the discussion were available to the Board (cf TD/B/WP/L.77). He alluded to the difficulties he had faced owing to the short time available and the divergent views among member States on several issues. Finally, he reported that the agreed conclusions and the Chairman's summary had been transmitted to the respective Chairmen of the ACABQ and the CPC.

24. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** informed the Board of the discussions in the ACABQ and the CPC, respectively on 23 and 25 June 1997, on the UNCTAD section of the proposed programme budget. In both Committees, a number of member States had supported the reform process of UNCTAD and the main points of the agreed conclusions of the Working Party. It had also been suggested that the Working Party could come back later to the issue of publications policy and to review the list of publications. The UNCTAD secretariat had made several clarifications in the Committees, such as on the comparison of the intergovernmental machinery before and after Midrand, the consistency between the reduction in resources and the streamlining of mandates at Midrand, the wealth of information provided on publications, the fact that the island and landlocked developing countries had become a cross-cutting issue while not being accorded less importance, and that the posts provided by the General Assembly on the issue of small island States would be retained.

25. The spokesman for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Mexico), referring to the report on the outcome of the Working Party and the Chairman's oral report, observed that the Working Party had not come up with substantive agreements except on the issue of LDCs, which his Group supported. Specifically, he regretted that the Working Party had not been able to agree to reallocate savings to finance the participation of experts from developing countries to the expert meetings. He added that this position enjoyed the full support of the African and Asian Groups.

26. The representative of **The Netherlands**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, thanked the Chairman of the Working Party for his efforts. He asked for clarification on how the outcome of the Working Party had been presented to the ACABQ and CPC.

27. The representative of the **United States of America** thanked the Chairman of the Working Party for his effort under the difficult circumstances, and expressed his disagreement with the views expressed by the spokesman for the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

28. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD** explained that the document containing the outcome had been circulated to the members of both the ACABQ and the CPC and introduced by the respective Chairman to the meeting. It had then been up to each member State to pick up any particular points during the meetings.

Action by the Board

29. The Board took note of the outcome of the twenty-ninth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget, which dealt mainly with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.[1/]

(c) Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on preparations for a meeting with actors in development

30. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 118 of the Midrand final document, the **Secretary-General of UNCTAD** reported on the progress made on this item.[2/]

31. The representative of **The Netherlands**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, expressed appreciation for the statement made by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. She commended the Secretary-General for his creative and innovative approach and said that the European Union would like to be briefed by the Secretary-General on further developments of this nature.

32. The representative of **Ethiopia** expressed his appreciation for the high-minded ideas put forward by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. As a least developed country, Ethiopia lacked resources for investment and technology. It was thus important to ensure that globalization should not further marginalize the least developed countries but rather that it integrate them into the global economy. The topics suggested by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD should reflect the direct concerns of LDCs.

[1/] The agreed conclusions and Chairman's summary, adopted by the Working Party at the second part of its twenty-ninth session on 16 June 1997, were available in TD/B/WP/L.77. Subsequently, the full report of the Working Party on its twenty-ninth session was issued in TD/B/EX(15)/6-TD/B/WP/101.

[2/] For the statement by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on preparations for a meeting with actors in development, see annex II.

33. The representative of **Madagascar** thanked the Secretary-General of UNCTAD for his concrete and action-oriented proposals. The lessons learned from the Pilot Seminar on the Mobilization of the Private Sector in order to Encourage Foreign Investment Flows towards the Least Developed Countries (Geneva, 23-25 June 1997) would contribute to the efforts made by the Secretary-General.

34. The representative of **Turkey** expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD for his ideas. She felt that further consultations were needed to mobilize public awareness and that there was also a need to conduct consultations with organizations like the World Economic Forum, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and regional organizations. She expressed her satisfaction at the offer made by the Government of France to host the Conference in Lyon.

35. The representative of **Brazil** said he looked forward to the continued consultations with the Secretary-General on this matter. When one spoke of actors in development, that concept included the civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The question of environment should also be taken into account. In this context, he referred to the special session of the General Assembly (Rio+5) and the approval of an important document on development by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-first session. Finally, he emphasized that the Partners for Development meeting should take into account the social dimension of development.

36. Responding to some of the questions, the **Secretary-General of UNCTAD** said that the briefing he had just given marked only the first step towards the Partners for Development meeting in Lyon. He explained that he had not been able to provide information to delegations on this matter earlier owing to the complicated legal aspects of integrating the civil society into the United Nations system. With regard to the choice of projects, he said that 90 per cent of them were ones that already existed, such as risk management.

Action by the Board

37. The Board took note of the statement made by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD [3] and of the comments made by delegations.

(d) Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the implementation of the proposals contained in the agreed conclusions 436 (XLIII): Development in Africa

38. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on this item (TD/B/EX(15)/2), the **UNCTAD Coordinator for Africa** recalled that the report had been prepared in response to paragraph 5 of Board agreed conclusions 436 (XLIII). The report aimed to present a comprehensive picture of UNCTAD's activities, in its areas of competence, in connection with the implementation of the UN-NADAF in the context of its analytical and policy development work, as well as in the area of technical cooperation and assistance to the African countries. A separate report would be submitted to the Board for its consideration of the item related to Africa at its

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[3] *Idem.*

forty-fourth regular session, which would analyse the adjustment programmes undertaken in the African countries, reflect on recent performances, and assess medium-term prospects for export-led growth, taking into account recent trends in savings and investment in FDI, external debt burden and the possible impact of the HIPCs debt initiative. As requested by the Board at its forty-third session, a panel of high-level experts would be invited for an informal exchange with delegations.

39. The spokesman for the African Group (Morocco) expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for the excellent manner in which he had followed up the agreed conclusions of the Board and welcomed the initiative of presenting a comprehensive report to the executive session. The African Group would like to see more detail provided in each area in order to better understand the full scope of UNCTAD's activities and he suggested that the document might be more prospective than descriptive in future. Regarding the Coordinated African Programme of Assistance on Services (CAPAS) initiative on trade in services, the African Group expressed its satisfaction and requested that similar initiatives be taken in the important area of investment. He called on donors to increase extra-budgetary resources to help UNCTAD carry out its assistance to African countries.

40. Responding to the spokesman for the African Group, the UNCTAD Coordinator for Africa welcomed the proposals for the improvement of the report. He confirmed that the UNCTAD initiative on trade was not limited to the new round of negotiations in services but that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in close cooperation with the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, had planned joint activities for the preparation of the second WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in 1998, including on issues related to trade and investment policy, trade and competition policy, transparency in government procurement and cooperation in organizing an Africa-wide conference preparatory to the Ministerial Conference.

Action by the Board

41. The Board took note of the "Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the implementation of the proposals contained in Board agreed conclusions 436 (XLIII): Development in Africa" (TD/B/EX(15)/2) and of the comments made by the spokesman for the African Group.

Chapter II

OTHER MATTERS IN THE FIELD OF TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

(Agenda item 3)

(a) Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its thirtieth session (21-24 April 1997)

42. Introducing the report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its thirtieth session (ITC/AG(XXX)/164), the **Chairman of the Joint Advisory Group** H.E. Mr. N. Benjelloun-Touimi (Morocco) recalled that, at the opening session, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the representative of the Director-General of WTO had announced the extension of ITC's Executive Director for another three-year period, as confirmed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

43. In his statement to the Joint Advisory Group, ITC's Executive Director had reported that ITC's refocusing exercise had entered its final stages. The organization was more streamlined, had a clearer vision of its future orientation, and was now more capable of meeting the needs of client countries and regions for better focused and more efficient technical assistance. ITC's Global Trust Fund and its Consultative Committee were highly efficient mechanisms for funding ITC's programme activities, and voluntary contributions had increased.

44. The Chairman reported that the Joint Advisory Group had expressed its appreciation to the Executive Director for ITC's current reform process and refocusing, reaffirmed the importance of ITC's mandate and expressed appreciation for its valuable, practical and highly operational work. The Group had examined a review of ITC's technical cooperation activities in 1996 based on its annual report, made recommendations on its future work programme and reviewed ITC's activities in human resource development following the independent evaluation of the subprogramme in 1996 and a technical meeting convened to consider the evaluation report in November 1996. The Group had also expressed its satisfaction with the effective functioning of the Consultative Committee of the ITC Global Trust Fund.

45. Some Joint Advisory Group representatives had suggested that steps be taken to set up a supervisory committee to oversee ITC's work programme and priorities, while others had considered that this was neither needed nor appropriate. Following a review of the situation with delegations, the Chairman had agreed to convene open-ended consultations as needed and appropriate before the next Group meeting in 1998.

46. Finally, the Joint Advisory Group Chairman thanked the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland for their announcements of confirmed or possible voluntary contributions to ITC during the JAG session.

47. The spokesman for the **Asian Group and China** (Singapore) thanked the Joint Advisory Group Chairman for his presentation and said that members of the Asian Group and China had joined the consensus in adopting the report in

a spirit of compromise. He drew attention to the observations made by the Asian Group and China in its statement to the Group on several issues of interest and concern, for which support had been expressed by many other developing countries. ITC had taken note of these issues and the Group had been assured of follow-up action. He looked forward to the informal consultations which would be conducted by the Chairman of the Group during the course of the year and which would provide an occasion to obtain some of the information requested on the issues raised. In conclusion, he said that the concerns expressed in the statement by the Asian Group and China to the Joint Advisory Group were of vital interest to developing countries and the Group wished to reiterate the need for prompt action to address them.

48. Responding to the statement on behalf of the Asian Group and China, the Chairman of the Joint Advisory Group said that it had been agreed to organize the informal consultations as appropriate after the necessary preparation, and that it was his intention to do so as soon as possible.

Action by the Board

49. The Board took note of the report of the Joint Advisory Group on its thirtieth session (ITC/AG(XXX)/164) as circulated to the Board under cover of a note by the UNCTAD secretariat (TD/B/EX(15)/4).

(b) Report of the Joint UNCTAD/IMO Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Maritime Liens and Mortgages and Related Subjects on its ninth session (2-6 December 1996)

Action by the Board

50. The Board took note of the report of the Joint UNCTAD/IMO Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Maritime Liens and Mortgages and Related Subjects on its ninth session (TD/B/IGE.1/4) and endorsed the recommendation contained therein to propose to the United Nations General Assembly the convening of a diplomatic conference to consider and adopt a convention on arrest of ships.

51. In an answer to a question from the representative of Japan as to the timing of the proposed diplomatic conference, the representative of the UNCTAD secretariat stated that the recommendation of the Joint Intergovernmental Group of Experts, together with the decisions of the Board and the IMO Council, would be first submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Upon approval by the General Assembly, a diplomatic Conference could be held during 1998.

Chapter III

INSTITUTIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED MATTERS

(Agenda item 4)

Action by the Board

(a) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

52. The Board took note that there were no new applications from intergovernmental organizations.

(b) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

53. The Board approved the applications of two non-governmental organizations and decided, in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and of the Bureau, to designate and classify them for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure and in accordance with paragraph 12 (b) of Board decision 43 (VII) as follows:

Special category: International Group of Protection and Indemnity Associations (TD/B/EX(15)/R.1/Add.1) to participate in the work of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development; and the International Chromium Development Association (TD/B/EX(15)/R.1/Add.2) to participate in the work of the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities. These documents are now de-restricted.

54. The Board also agreed to the revised classification of in-status non-governmental organizations in the special category, as contained in annex II to document TD/B/EX(15)/3, thus bringing them into line with the post-Midrand intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD.

55. The Board took note that, in the light of the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 on relations between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, the UNCTAD secretariat had prepared a revision of the arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the activities of UNCTAD, as contained in TD/B/EX(15)/3 and Corr.1. The Board decided to postpone its decision on this question until the nineteenth executive session of the Board.

56. Having heard the statement made by the UNCTAD Senior Legal Adviser in introducing the note by the secretariat,[4/] and in conformity with the recommendations made by the Board at its meeting on 27 June 1997, the Board took note of the secretariat note entitled "Non-governmental organizations participating in the activities of UNCTAD" (TD/B/EX(15)/3 and Corr.1) and

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[4/] For the statement made on this question by the UNCTAD Senior Legal Adviser, see annex IV.

requested the UNCTAD secretariat to report to the Board at its nineteenth executive session on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

57. The Board also noted that, in conformity with the provisions of Board decision 43 (VII), sections III and IV, and after consultation with the Governments concerned (South Africa, the United Kingdom and India), the Secretary-General had included in the Register of national non-governmental organizations the following three national non-governmental organizations: Land and Agriculture Policy Centre (LAPC), the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD), and Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS). Background information on these organizations was before the Board in documents TD/B/EX(15)/L.1, L.2 and L.3.

58. The Board also took note of the following changes in names of organizations in status with UNCTAD: The Federation of European Rope and Twine Industries (EUROCORD), which had been granted status in the special category by the Board at the first part of its twenty-fourth session, was now the Federation of European Rope, Twine and Netting Industries, retaining the acronym EUROCORD; EDI World Institute, which had been granted status in the special category by the Board at the first part of its fortieth session, was now the Electronic Commerce World Institute.

Chapter IV

OTHER BUSINESS

(Agenda item 5)

(a) Adoption of the Technical Cooperation Strategy of UNCTAD

59. The **President of the Board** informed delegations that the consultations of the Secretary-General on this question had resulted in an agreement by member States to adopt the text of the Technical Cooperation Strategy of UNCTAD as contained in Part A of TD/B/EX(14)/3.

60. The spokesman for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Mexico) expressed great appreciation and support for UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities that enhanced developing countries' capacity to participate in the international trading system. He noted with satisfaction the 12 per cent increase in extra-budgetary resources, in line with Midrand recommendations. He hoped this would reverse the unfavourable trend of recent years, in particular with respect to the Latin American and Caribbean area. He also requested that future reports provide more information on project activities, including joint technical cooperation with other organizations.

61. The representative of **Switzerland** expressed appreciation for the effort put into this work. He drew attention to paragraph 10 of the Strategy on cooperation with other organizations and requested that consideration should be given to the strengthening of the role played by countries members of UNCTAD in the conclusion of formal cooperation arrangements with other organizations. Any formal arrangements concerning the functioning of the Integrated Framework on Trade-related Technical Cooperation should be discussed with and endorsed by member States. This was especially valid with regard to the forthcoming High-level Meeting for LDCs to be held in October 1997.

62. The representative of the **Netherlands**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, underlined that the approval of the Strategy did not mean that it could not be modified in the light of experience, for example with respect to the integrated assistance to be provided in the framework of the High-level Meeting on LDCs. On the three-year rolling plan, he also expressed the wish to be able to review, at the October session of the Working Party, experience to date as well as the preparation of the 1998-2000 plan.

63. The representative of **Japan** welcomed the Strategy and requested clarification on evaluation procedures and on the intensification of coordination activities. He expected UNCTAD to contribute substantively to the LDC High-level Meeting.

64. The representative of **Norway** supported the statement made by Switzerland on the need to involve member States closely in the preparation of the

integrated framework for LDCs and requested more structured information with respect to the Plan.

65. The **Chief, Inter-organizational Affairs and Technical Cooperation**, responding to points raised, confirmed that the main focus of UNCTAD's technical cooperation was to help developing countries to integrate more effectively into the international economy. He suggested that the remarks regarding arrangements for a coordinated approach to the integrated framework for LDCs would need to be pursued in the appropriate context. The Technical Cooperation Strategy would need to evolve in the light of experience. Members of the Working Party would have the opportunity to consider the preparation of the rolling plan for 1998-2000 at the October 1997 session. He also explained arrangements for the evaluation of programmes and projects.

Action by the Board

66. The Board, acting on the agreement reached by member States in informal consultations, decided to adopt the text of the Technical Cooperation Strategy of UNCTAD contained in Part A of TD/B/EX(14)/3.[5/]

(b) UNCTAD publications policy

Action by the Board

67. In the light of the agreement reached in the informal consultations of the President on this subject, the Board decided, in accordance with paragraph 107 (a) of the Midrand final document, that it would scrutinize the UNCTAD publications policy at its sixteenth executive session, following prior consultations.

(c) Designation of the President and Bureau of the forty-fourth session of the Trade and Development Board

Action by the Board

68. In accordance with the nomination made by the coordinator for Group D, the Board designated H.E. Mr. Goce Petreski (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) for the post of President of the Board at its forty-fourth session.

[5/] Text originally submitted to the Board at its fourteenth executive session on 24 March 1997.

69. The Board noted that the President had received the nominations of representatives of the following countries to membership of the Bureau:

Rapporteur:	Thailand
Vice-President:[1/]	Brazil
	Ireland
	Islamic Republic of Iran
	Jamaica
	Netherlands
	Norway
	Russian Federation
	United States of America

70. The President announced that he had been informed of the nomination of France for the post of Chairman of Sessional Committee I.

(d) Communication from the United Kingdom

71. The President drew attention to the communication circulated at the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the question of international responsibility for Hong Kong (TD/B/EX(15)/7).

(e) Regional Symposium for Africa - International Investment Arrangements: The Development Dimension

72. Reporting on the Regional Symposium, held in Fez, Morocco, on 19–20 June 1997, the representative of **Morocco** read out the "Message" adopted by the participants in the Symposium and requested that the Message be included *in extenso* in the final report of the Board on its fifteenth executive session.[2/]

[1/] Two posts remain to be filled.

[2/] For the Message from Fez, see annex III.

Chapter V

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

73. The fifteenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was opened on 27 June 1997 by Mr. Patrick Sinyinza (Zambia), President of the Board.

B. Bureau of the fifteenth executive session

74. There being no change in the elected officers of the Bureau since the forty-third session, the Bureau of the Board at its fifteenth executive session was as follows:

President:	Mr. Patrick Sinyinza	(Zambia)
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. Anton Bebler	(Slovenia)
	Mr. Krit Garnjana-Goonchorn	(Thailand)
	Mrs. Arundhati Ghose	(India)
	Mr. Peter R. Jenkins	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. Andrei Kolossovsky	(Russian Federation)
	Mr. Alexander A. Kravetz	(El Salvador)
	Mr. Björn Skogmo	(Norway)
	Mr. Daniel L. Spiegel	(United States of America)
	Mr. Fisseha Yimer Aboye	(Ethiopia)
	Mr. Jun Yokota	(Japan)
Rapporteur:	Mrs. Violeta Fonseca de Sanabria	(Venezuela)

C. Adoption of the agenda

(Agenda item 1)

75. At its 884th meeting, on 27 June 1997, the Board adopted the provisional agenda for its fifteenth executive session, as circulated in TD/B/EX(15)/1. (For the agenda, see annex I below).

D. Report of the Board on its fifteenth executive session

(Agenda item 6)

76. In accordance with past practice, the Board authorized the Rapporteur, under the authority of the President, to prepare the report of the Board on its fifteenth executive session.

ANNEXES

Annex I

AGENDA FOR THE FIFTEENTH EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Matters requiring action by the Board in follow-up to the ninth session of the Conference and arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary and other bodies:

   (a) Reports of the Commissions on their first sessions

   (b) Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget on its twenty-ninth session

   (c) Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on preparations for a meeting with actors in development

   (d) Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the implementation of the proposals contained in the agreed conclusions 436 (XLIII): Development in Africa

3. Other matters in the field of trade and development:

   (a) Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its thirtieth session

   (b) Report of the Joint UNCTAD/IMO Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Maritime Liens and Mortgages and Related Subjects on its ninth session

4. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:

   (a) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

   (b) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

5. Other business

   (a) Adoption of the Technical Cooperation Strategy of UNCTAD

   (b) UNCTAD publications policy

   (c) Designation of the President and Bureau of the forty-fourth session of the Trade and Development Board

   (d) Communication from the United Kingdom

   (e) Regional Symposium for Africa - International Investment Arrangements: The Development Dimension

6. Report of the Board on its fifteenth executive session.

Annex II

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UNCTAD ON PREPARATIONS FOR A MEETING WITH ACTORS IN DEVELOPMENT

(Agenda item 2(c))

1. The meeting of all actors in development, on preparations for which I have the pleasure to report to you today, is an offspring of my proposal to UNCTAD IX for the integration of the civil society into our work. As you will recall, the goal of my initiative was to provide a new institutional mechanism that would facilitate the engagement in UNCTAD's work of the more active elements of the emerging global civil society, specially the private sector, research centres, academia and non-governmental organizations. After intense discussions, UNCTAD IX agreed to test this idea by holding a first meeting with all actors in development. This meeting would be convened by me under my own responsibility.

2. Paragraph 119 of the "A Partnership for Growth and Development" states that "the Conference notes with appreciation the Secretary-General's initiative to hold a meeting with actors in development to advise him. This meeting should be financed from extrabudgetary resources. The Secretary-General is invited to inform the next regular session of the Board of preparations for this meeting and to report subsequently on its outcome".

3. The item was placed on the agenda of the forty-third session of the Trade and Development Board under the title "Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on preparations for a meeting with actors in development". At its 881st meeting, on 18 October 1996, the Trade and Development Board, in the light of the oral report by the Chairman of Sessional Committee II and following approval by the Bureau of the Board, decided to postpone consideration of agenda item 7 (a) until the next regular session of the Board.

4. The fourteenth executive session of the Board, on 24 March 1997, in approving the provisional agenda of the fifteenth executive session of the Board, simultaneously with a provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Board, decided to place my report on the preparations for a meeting with actors in development on the agenda of this executive session of the Board.

5. About a year after Midrand, the view that the closer involvement of the civil society should be a distinctive feature of the United Nations in the twenty-first century is no longer as novel as it was when I first made my proposal. I am happy to see that nowadays there is practically no international organization, not only in the United Nations system but also outside it, that is not actively seeking ways of integrating the civil society. What was new in December 1995 is becoming a common concern of international organizations now. I hardly need to remind you that, independently of my proposal, Mr. Kofi Annan has stated the importance that he attaches to this question in the context of his plans for the reform and revitalization of the United Nations.

6. This is therefore a challenge for the United Nations as a whole. The question of how to open the Organization to new constituencies, particularly in the economic and social sectors, has been with us for a long time. The main lesson that we should draw from the limited success of past efforts in this regard is that the legal, political and practical complexity of the issues involved makes it impossible to apply ready-made, generalized solutions. This must be a gradual, carefully thought-out process. It is against this background that my suggestions about mechanisms for the integration of the civil society in the work of UNCTAD should be seen as a modest but realistic contribution to a process of gradual reform that is only starting. As the Italian proverb says, *Chi va piano, va sano e va lontano*".

7. The questions that arise here affect the very essence of the United Nations as an international organization. The answers to these questions still need to mature, probably in the forum of the General Assembly and with the close involvement of the Secretary-General himself. With these arguments for caution in mind, we have decided to adjust my initial proposal in order to take into account all the understandable concerns of member States about its institutional impact, and we have come to a conclusion that I hope you will all share with us.

8. Our partnerships with the civil society would be based on the practical experience that we have gained through concrete projects between UNCTAD, Governments, the private sector and NGOs and that have produced practical results for development. This has been the reason why we have decided to call our initiative "Partners for Development". We intend to prepare a meeting of Partners for Development next year and I would like to share with you some ideas about how we intend to proceed.

9. The word "partnership" is now heard in many statements but, in general, the expression is still lacking in concrete content. We believe that we should give the expression "partners for development" a content of action. This is why our goal will be to make next year's meeting not a meeting about declarations or documents, but about concrete approval of partnership projects. So we do not intend to devote a single minute of our future meeting to the painful negotiation of a final text.

10. Our intention would be to have the results of the Partners for Development meeting fed into the process of preparation for UNCTAD X. Thus, we will be able to present to you real examples of the partnerships that can be established between UNCTAD and the civil society, their practical modalities and their results. This, I think, will be a much sounder base for any debate on the ways to make these partnerships a standard way of work in UNCTAD. They will also attest to the organization's capacity to focus on the demands of the people of developing countries and to mobilize minds, technology, political will and, why not, resources to meet them.

11. I expect two kinds of results from the meeting of Partners for Development. First of all, Partners for Development will be asked to think together about development. They should provide a framework where the private sector, research centres, academia, NGOs and the public sector can contribute to a better understanding of some development issues linked to trade and investment and to develop solutions that go beyond our traditional outputs.

12. The other component of the outcome that I expect from the Partners for Development meeting will be practical partnerships to act together for development. These partnerships will incorporate into UNCTAD's work the efficiency, the ideas and, hopefully, the resources (not only material, but also human resources) of some of the private actors whose trade, investment and technology decisions drive development today. These are resources that international institutions working for development have not tapped so far. While we will strive to reverse the current decreasing trend in traditional resources for development, I believe that we cannot afford to continue to ignore the formidable potential for development of the private sector. Its resources, together with the creative potential of other actors of civil society, will help us to devise and put into practice new means to promote development.

13. The theme of the Partners for Development meeting will be "Markets and development". I have chosen this theme because it encompasses all the messages and the questions that are central to UNCTAD's new approach to the fight against poverty and inequality, and of course it stresses the fact that we are going beyond the contribution of Governments; we are looking for the contribution of the people who make up the markets. The market economy is the framework of development today, and I do not have to explain all the reasons why it has moved to the centre of the stage.

14. Under this overarching theme, I will propose to Partners for Development two broad sets of topics, which will be called "Thinking together for development" (under which we will ask Partners for Development to engage in a collective reflection on issues in which we feel that the future of development would benefit from their intellectual contribution) and "Acting together for development", which will comprise a limited number of practical, action-oriented partnership projects.

15. Some of the topics that we will propose under "Thinking together for development" will relate to understanding how market mechanisms can be best adjusted in development strategies. For instance, we would deal with:

(a) Globalization, inequality and poverty. Investment and technology choices made by companies are shaping the global economy. We should look at this phenomenon from the perspective of efficiency, but we should also think about the fears of people regarding the consequences of changes and about how we can develop together some answers to the ethical, ecological and social issues related to trade and investment. How can business, NGO, Governments and UNCTAD work together to design market incentives that make social as well as business sense? We have several ideas in that direction that we would examine with our partners.

(b) A development-conscious society: Communication and development partners could examine the role of socially responsible media in economic development. How can the media, and even advertising, contribute to the creation of a global development-supportive environment. They could look at ways to enhance the access of developing countries to economic information as an input to truly global development, and in particular make proposals for new avenues for cooperation among the global media, communication firms and UNCTAD.

16. Under "Acting together for development", our intention would be to present a limited number of pilot practical partnership projects involving private enterprises, academia, NGOs and the public sector. We are building here from what already exists, that is we are starting from the concrete experience that has been accumulated in some specific areas. Through these partnership projects, we hope that new resources will become available for development. In selecting them, we have used three criteria: first, they should relate to programmes of work which enjoy the widest political support among member States; second, UNCTAD should have a comparative advantage in the analysis of the issues involved; and third, we should have detected enough interest among external players to ensure that in their implementation we will be able to rely on a network of external expertise.

17. The partnership projects proposed under "Acting together for development" will be grouped under different "threads". The following are some examples, but I am still considering a few additions and modifications:

(a) **Profit and development**: This topic will comprise threads such as:

- "Trade, development and biodiversity", in which our goal will be to create partnerships between enterprises from developed and developing countries, Governments and NGOs to foster bio-business and to promote bio-resource industries, thus enhancing the capacity of developing countries to benefit from increased participation in the market for biological-based resources.

- "Commodity finance and risk management", in which partnerships would be launched among producer associations, banks and other financial institutions and Governments in order to address this constraint faced by many developing countries by extending new financial engineering tools to commodities markets.

(b) **Private capital for micro-banks**. Under this item Partners for Development will address a major obstacle to enterprise development in the informal and micro-enterprise sectors. Partnerships will replicate the model developed by UNCTAD with the cooperation of the Government of Luxembourg and the International Bank of Luxembourg. They will involve international banks and asset managers, micro-finance institutions, and Governments in order to improve the conditions in which micro-finance institutions obtain resources in international capital markets. This will be done by launching investment funds that channel private investors' resources (which earn market rates of return) to micro-banks and non-profit organizations that finance micro and informal enterprises in developing countries. In this particular case, what is new in relation to the initiatives that have been launched by the World Bank and other institutions is that for the first time this initiative is being launched with a private bank and will lead to investment that does not come from public funds.

(c) **Creation of a worldwide network of academic institutions for trade- and investment-related training.** The partnership projects launched under this item will reinforce the effectiveness of national and international efforts in human capacity building in the area of international trade and investment by establishing new associations between UNCTAD and some leading academic and research institutions worldwide. They will cover issues related to the preparation and delivery of training programmes and formal courses on specific subjects such as commercial diplomacy, investment negotiations, technology, trade efficiency, etc., and the use of distance learning for human resource development. Last week I had a very interesting personal experience in this regard, when I participated in a video-conference organized by the Monterey Institute for Commercial Diplomacy in California, in collaboration with San Diego State University. This video-conference allowed the speakers to discuss issues of commercial diplomacy with an audience of 30,000 people in several developing countries. It is amazing how few resources are available for training in trade and investment negotiations, which is an extremely important issue for developing countries. I am convinced that the possibilities created by new technologies are almost boundless, and through these partnership projects we intend to exploit them to the fullest possible extent.

(d) **Intelligent trade: partnerships for electronic commerce.** This group of partnerships will build on the success of UNCTAD's Global Trade Point Network and will aim at reinforcing the capacity of developing countries' enterprises, and particularly those from LDCs, to join the emerging global electronic marketplace, which will undoubtedly become the major source of value and wealth in the next century. This will include partnerships for the creation of "trust communities" to promote secure electronic trade, alliances to combine the interests of large information technology companies and small- and medium sized enterprises, and capacity-building for electronic trade.

(e) **A follow-up to Africa Connect.** As you will remember, Africa Connect was held in parallel with UNCTAD IX to promote and facilitate new investment flows towards African countries. A follow-up on the outcome of this meeting is needed.

18. The particulars of the topics to be discussed at the Partners for Development meeting are open to some refinement, and one or two more may still be added, particularly in the field of enterprise development. I am, naturally, open to any comments or proposals that delegations may want to make to the secretariat through bilateral contacts. More details about the meeting, such as its day-by-day programme, a first indication of participants, etc., will be made available to you at the next High-Level Segment of the Trade and Development Board.

19. The Partners for Development meeting is planned for November 1998. Its duration will be four working days.

20. The city of Lyon, France, has expressed its interest in hosting this meeting. Conversations between the secretariat and the local authorities are progressing in a very productive manner, and we expect that we will be able to reach a mutually satisfactory understanding soon. The city of Lyon is prepared to make available its excellent conference facilities (the ones used for the 1996 G-7 meeting) and its historical *Mairie*.

21. I would also like to thank publicly the Mayor of Lyon, Mr. Raymond Barre, former Prime Minister of France, for his support for this initiative. Mr. Barre, who among other achievements has greatly contributed to the international prominence of the Davos conferences, which pioneered efforts to bring together the private sector and Governments, has expressed his personal willingness to contribute to the preparations for the meeting.

Annex III

REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR AFRICA
INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT ARRANGEMENTS:
THE DEVELOPMENT DIMENSION

Message from Fez

Participants thanked UNCTAD and the Government of Morocco for organizing and hosting the "Regional Symposium: Africa. International Investment Arrangements: The Development Dimension", Fez, 19-20 June 1997. The Symposium was attended by 51 representatives from 21 African countries and 17 observers from regional organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Africa, the African-American Islamic Institute and the Union du Maghreb Arabe, as well as the Government of Norway and the European Commission. The participants were grateful to the Government of Norway, the European Commission and the Government of Australia for their financial support for this event.

Participants noted that international discussions on investment are becoming more intense, as reflected in the deliberations of the Symposium, and concluded that countries need to be prepared to participate in them effectively in order to safeguard and advance their own interests. This includes a need that countries be aware of the whole range of issues involved, in order to be in the best possible position to define their own interest situations.

Participants also noted that, while there are several subregional investment arrangements in Africa, no continent-wide investment agreement exists, in the framework of which African countries deal with investment-agreements issues, analyse the issues involved in greater depth and identify their own interests. Compared to the countries of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the OECD, Africa is at a disadvantage in this respect.

Participants noted, therefore, that events like this Symposium are of key importance for Africa and expressed their hope that another Symposium of this kind could be organized for Africa, examining in depth key issues relevant to international arrangements, and especially their development dimension. Such a Symposium would also profit greatly from the technical paper on key issues UNCTAD has begun to prepare.

In this context, it needs to be recognized that least developed countries need special attention and assistance in this area. Participants therefore encouraged UNCTAD to explore the possibility of holding a Symposium on these matters specifically for least developed countries.

Participants emphasized that UNCTAD's work and support in this area of international investment arrangements is of key importance for developing countries in general, and African nations in particular. They also welcomed the efforts to strengthen the cooperation of UNCTAD with regional organizations concerned with this issue.

Annex IV

STATEMENT BY THE UNCTAD SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

(Agenda item 4 (b))

My comments relate to the note by the UNCTAD secretariat TD/B/EX(15)/3 and Corr.1 entitled "Non-governmental organizations participating in the work of UNCTAD". About 170 non-governmental organizations are entitled to participate in the activities of UNCTAD. The names of the organizations are given on pages 12 to 21 of the document.

The Trade and Development Board decides on applications for consultative status by NGOs in accordance with criteria set out in a decision adopted by the Board in 1968 in decision 43 (VII). The text of that decision is reprinted on pages 8 to 11 of the document. One of the criteria to be fulfilled is that an applicant non-governmental organization should be *international* in structure, which means that it should have members in more than one country.

For many years, the Economic and Social Council had the same rule. However, the Council decided in 1996 that in the future *national* non-governmental organizations should also be entitled to participate in the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

The UNCTAD secretariat has proposed, in the note before you, that UNCTAD, following the lead of the Economic and Social Council, may wish to decide that national non-governmental organizations should also be entitled to participate in the work of all the bodies of UNCTAD. Such a decision will require an amendment of the rules, which are reprinted on pages 8 to 11 of the secretariat note. Those pages show clearly the two amendments to the rules which are being proposed for consideration by the Board.

I have a closing comment on the nature of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of UNCTAD. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the representatives of accepted organizations are entitled to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the public meetings of the intergovernmental bodies. They may make oral or written statements on matters related to an item of the agenda on which they have a special competence or interest.

Annex V

ATTENDANCE */

1. The following States members of UNCTAD, members of the Board, were represented at the session:

Afghanistan
Algeria
Australia
Austria
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bolivia
Brazil
Bulgaria
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Czech Republic
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Gabon
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malaysia
Malta
Mexico
Morocco
Myanmar
Nepal
Netherlands
Norway
Pakistan
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Russian Federation
Singapore
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sweden
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Zambia

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*/ For list of participants, see TD/B/15(EX)/INF.2.

2. The following States members of UNCTAD, not members of the Board, were represented as observers at the session:

Brunei Darussalam
Kazakstan
Holy See

3. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO was represented at the session.

4. The following specialized agencies and related organization were represented at the session:

International Labour Organisation
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
International Monetary Fund
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
World Trade Organization

5. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Arab Labour Organization
European Community
Inter-American Development Bank
Organization of the Islamic Conference
Organization of African Unity

6. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

General Category

International Chamber of Commerce
International Confederation of Free Trade Union
World Federation of United Nations Associations
World Savings Bank Institute
World Vision International